



**Permanent Select Committee
on Intelligence
U.S. House of Representatives**
June 11, 2019

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

The Honorable Daniel Coats
Director of National Intelligence
Office of the Director of National Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20511

Dear Director Coats:

We write regarding the written testimony of Dr. Rod Schoonover, a senior analyst in the Office of the Geographer and Global Issues at the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research (State INR). Dr. Schoonover appeared on behalf of State INR in an open hearing before our Committee last Wednesday, June 5 to testify about the national security implications of climate change. Two other Intelligence Community (IC) analysts, representing your office and the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), testified alongside Dr. Schoonover.

The Committee sincerely appreciated all three witnesses' testimonies about the manifold and interlocking assessed dangers that future climate change impacts pose to U.S. national security interests. However, the circumstances surrounding the absence of Dr. Schoonover's written statement for the record (SFR) – including troubling public reports published since the open hearing – have left the Committee alarmed that officials within the Executive Office of the President apparently sought to suppress for political reasons Dr. Schoonover's and State INR's objective analysis about this urgent national security issue.

Both the Washington Post¹ and the New York Times² have reported disturbing revelations about White House attempts to demand politically-motivated changes to Dr. Schoonover's prepared scientific and intelligence analysis. An apparent draft version of Dr. Schoonover's testimony posted online by the New York Times³ is rife with politically-driven comments and deletions from Executive Office of the President personnel, including National

¹ "White House blocked intelligence agency's written testimony calling climate change 'possibly catastrophic,'" by Juliet Eilperin, Josh Dawsey, and Brady Dennis, The Washington Post, June 8, 2019: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2019/06/08/white-house-blocked-intelligence-aides-written-testimony-saying-human-caused-climate-change-could-be-possibly-catastrophic/>

² "White House Tried to Stop Climate Science Testimony, Documents Show," by Lisa Friedman, The New York Times, June 8, 2019: <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/08/climate/rod-schoonover-testimony.html>

³ <https://int.nyt.com/data/documenthelper/1103-rod-schoonover-testimony/9ea6b07179b17035421f/optimized/full.pdf#page=1>

Security Council staff, that appear designed to censor and manipulate an intelligence assessment to suit the Trump Administration's policy of climate change denialism.

If these reports are correct, they bear a disconcerting similarity to the George W. Bush Administration's effort to sideline State INR and skew intelligence for political ends in the lead up to the 2003 Iraq War. We share profound concern that current White House officials in this instance abused the interagency process in an effort to manipulate, remove, and ultimately suppress the independent, objective analysis State INR planned to present before the Committee on a matter of national urgency.

According to both outlets, State INR resisted the changes demanded by White House officials, which prevented Dr. Schoonover's written SFR from being delivered to the Committee. If accurate, we commend State INR for its support to its analysts and the integrity of their work in the face of political pressure. They reflect the ethos and consummate professionalism of the broader IC and its workforce, who have dedicated themselves to the highest analytic standards and tradecraft. Anything less than complete commitment to the IC's fundamental mission to present unbiased and rigorous intelligence assessments leaves policymakers and Congress blind to the world as it is.

In light of these reports and consistent with the Committee oversight jurisdiction of the Intelligence Community and its activities, the Committee has no choice but to undertake an inquiry into these allegations of undue White House interference in intelligence analysis and testimony before the Committee. In your capacity as head of the U.S. Intelligence Community, with ultimate responsibility for ensuring that all analytic products adhere to strict standards of integrity and remain free of political slant or agenda, the Committee's request your assistance in securing the following:

- Testimony from an appropriate senior representative from ODNI to address, among other issues, (1) ODNI's policies and processes to protect the integrity and prevent the politicization of IC intelligence analysis and (2) ODNI communications with personnel within the Executive Office of the President (including officials on the National Security Council staff, OMB, and the White House Office of Legislative Affairs), as well as the State Department (including State INR), ONI, and any other IC element, regarding the Committee's June 5 hearing and with respect to reviewing, editing, commenting on, and/or approving written and oral testimony from ODNI, State INR, and ONI;
- Production to the Committee of ODNI's written testimony, as prepared for submission to the Committee prior to review from personnel within the Executive Office of the President, including officials from the offices cited above, as well as any and all edited versions of ODNI's written testimony provided by the Executive Office of the President back to ODNI;
- Production to the Committee of any and all communications, regardless of form and classification, of ODNI personnel with personnel from the Executive Office of the President, including officials from the offices cited above—prior and subsequent to the Committee's June 5 hearing—to include any and all documents and other materials

attached to or embedded within electronic correspondence, regarding: (1) the June 5 hearing; and (2) written and/or oral testimony before the Committee, including deliberations about the appearance of IC representatives, including Dr. Schoonover, before the Committee.

The Committee appreciates and expects ODNI and the Intelligence Community's full and complete cooperation with the Committee's duly authorized oversight. The production of the information, material, and testimony requested by the Committee is required under law, and, given the subject matter and U.S. government officials involved, cannot be withheld from the Committee for any legitimate reason. Absent compliance, the Committee is prepared to consider compulsory process.

The Committee would appreciate fulfillment of this request no later than the close of business on **June 21, 2019**. Should you or your staff have any questions about the request, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-7690.

Sincerely,


























